

## **Researchers – Process Notes**

### **Introduction**

1. The CCRC welcomes proposals from researchers who are interested in analysing CCRC data to further academic research relevant to the work of the CCRC. Whilst the CCRC cannot provide any funding to assist with proposed projects, the CCRC Research Committee is willing to discuss the possibility of providing written support for applications to funding bodies.

### **Application Process**

2. Initial correspondence regarding research proposals should be emailed to the CCRC's Research Committee at [researchcall@CCRC.gov.uk](mailto:researchcall@CCRC.gov.uk). The Research Committee will ask the researcher to submit a short outline proposal in the first instance for review by the Research Committee (maximum 3 pages). For suitable proposals, the Research Committee will request a full proposal and ask researchers to address any specific questions raised by the outline proposal. Requirements for outline proposals and full proposals are as follows:

#### **3. Outline Proposal Requirements**

- a. 3 page word document or text searchable PDF in Arial, font size 11pt with page margins of at least 2 cm;
- b. Researcher details to include host institution, supervisor details (where applicable) and names and roles of all project staff. Please include a short summary of researcher skills and experience;
- c. Key research questions and outcomes to include a descriptive title and a summary of the project written in non-technical language. The summary should include a general background to the project, focus and aims, methods and expected outcomes;
- d. Proposed timetable;
- e. Proposed/confirmed funding details.

#### **4. Full Proposal Requirements (see guidance notes for full details)**

- a. A word document or text searchable PDF in Arial, font size 11pt with page margins of at least 2 cm, maximum 10 sides;
- b. A detailed exposition of the research project's background and context, focus and aims, methods and expected outcomes;
- c. Indication of CCRC resources anticipated e.g. data required and CCRC staff input required with outline dates where possible;
- d. A draft timetable to include project stages and proposed dates for milestone reports and a final report;
- e. Diversity and ethics issues (to include any Institutional Ethical Agreement);
- f. Proposed/confirmed funding details;
- g. Proposed dissemination of research;
- h. Signed acceptance of the CCRC's research conditions as follows:

- i. To undertake background and security checks (see below);
  - ii. To sign the CCRC's own confidentiality agreement (see below);
  - iii. To provide the CCRC with an interim report approximately mid-way through the research project, to check that research aims and methods reflect the original proposal;
  - iv. Any material changes to the overall aims of the research project to be agreed with the CCRC in advance;
  - v. To share any resulting databases/materials with the CCRC;
  - vi. To provide a copy of any proposed publications to the CCRC prior to publication and to allow the CCRC the opportunity to comment on any findings where necessary;
  - vii. The CCRC has the right to review (and if necessary withdraw) its support for any research projects and withdraw access to CCRC data where a researcher breaches the terms of its agreement with the CCRC or breaches any confidentiality requirements.
5. The Outline Proposal should be submitted in writing to the CCRC Research Committee, who will consider and if necessary suggest any amendments to the researcher(s). Research Committee staff will then indicate to researchers whether the Committee requires a full proposal to be submitted for consideration.
  6. The CCRC's Research Committee will assess all research proposals using the criteria published on its website.

## **Decision**

7. Once the Research Committee has considered the researcher's full proposal, the Committee will inform the CCRC's CEO of their decision. As the CEO has overall accountability for the way in which the Commission spends its money it is then for the CEO to sign-off the decision of the Research Committee once any impact on CCRC resources has been assessed. Research Committee staff will then inform the researcher of the decision.
8. Alternatively, Research Committee staff will go back to the researcher(s) to request further information which is required before a decision can be taken.
9. Once the CCRC has agreed to support the research project, Research Committee staff will provide a copy of the Confidentiality Agreement for signing and security checks will be initiated. Any changes to the standard Confidentiality Agreement master must be discussed and approved by the CCRC Legal Adviser.

## **Background and security checks**

10. Once a decision to allow the researcher access to CCRC data has been signed off by the CEO, the CCRC will arrange for the necessary background and security checks to be carried out.

11. For all researchers a Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) check and DBS check will be carried out by the CCRC, which will include checking their ID and collecting appropriate references.
  12. Applicants should normally have been resident in the United Kingdom for at least three years preceding being a researcher at the CCRC. Non-UK nationals may be accepted, but there should be no employment restriction in respect of their permit to stay in the United Kingdom. Evidence of this will need to be provided to the CCRC.
  13. Identity Documents – the CCRC will need to see documents to confirm your identity and right to work in the UK. We will need to see:
    - Current full passport
    - Current full British driving licence
    - Recent utility bill or bank statement dated within the last 3 months (original not a printed out copy).
- Original documents must be seen, as photocopies are not acceptable. If the researcher does not have any of these documents the researcher should speak to the CCRC to discuss other acceptable documents.
14. If the researcher will need to view case files and case data, either on paper or on screen via the CCRC's case management system, in addition to the above they will need a national security clearance, i.e. CTC clearance. If the researcher does not need to access to this material they may only need the Baseline Personal Security check (BPSS) and a police check. This decision will be made by the CCRC's Departmental Security Officer.
  15. Once the researcher has completed the forms for the NSV they will be sent an email with details of how to log-in to the online security questionnaire. Once this form has been submitted by the researcher the process will start. **Please note that the process of security clearance can take some time to complete, and may in some cases take up to 8 weeks.**

## IT system access

16. Any applications for access to IT systems will be assessed on an individual basis. Access to any IT systems will only be granted if it is needed, and will be limited to what is required. Access to any IT systems must be authorised by the CCRC's Director of Casework Operations.
17. If permission to access to the CCRC's electronic casework files is granted, the researcher will either access that data at the CCRC's offices or be provided with remote access to cloud-based file sharing site. The majority of CCRC research projects now use the remote file sharing approach.
18. Internal CCRC email will only be provided where necessary, but researchers should not be included in any Outlook email groups (e.g.: 'all casework' or 'all CCRC systems users').
19. If access to any IT systems is provided the researcher will need to read and sign the User Declaration.

## **Confidentiality agreement**

20. All researchers will need to sign and return the CCRC's confidentiality agreement.
21. The CCRC's confidentiality agreement provides that, in accordance with section 23 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1995, researchers undertake not to disclose information obtained by the CCRC in the course of its reviews other than in accordance with the exemptions provided for in section 24 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1995. Also as part of the confidentiality agreement, researchers agree to respect the rights of all CCRC staff and applicants to the CCRC in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and specifically that research will be anonymised to prevent the identification of individuals throughout the research project and at the point of publication.

## **Induction**

22. New researchers will be given information about the CCRC's data and data management system at the start of a project.
23. The CCRC's Research Committee has a dedicated Administrator who will assist new researchers thereafter with accessing their sharing folders and understanding available data.
24. Where necessary, an initial meeting with Research Committee staff will be set up at the start of the project.
25. Researchers need to complete on-line training "Responsible for information – General User" (on the Civil Service Learning system), before access is given access to any of the CCRC's information.

## **Office access**

26. If the research project requires physical access to the CCRC's offices, the researcher must let CCRC Research Committee staff know how long and how often they plan to work at the CCRC office (e.g.: a couple of days a week for three months), and inform the CCRC of any changes.
27. The researcher should inform CCRC staff of the specific dates when they are planning on working at the CCRC office so that arrangements can be made for an access pass and desk to be available.
28. Access to the office for researchers will only be during office hours of 9am to 5.30pm.
29. Access control cards to the CCRC office will only be issued to researchers if necessary, and when the appropriate security and background checks have been carried out.

## **Final report submission and presentation**

30. The researcher must submit their final report to the CCRC Research Committee before final copy and before any publication so the Research Committee can comment as necessary.
31. A copy of the report will be retained by the CCRC and published on the CCRC's website, and may also be promoted via the CCRC's social media platforms.
32. The researcher will be asked to give a final presentation of their findings to CCRC staff at a mutually convenient time.